

CHAPTER 2.

**AT A CROSSROADS: THE
COMMITTEE FOR CHANGE
AND THE VOICES OF CCCC**

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Scholars and administrators of composition and rhetoric long have called for changes that would make the field's policies and its practices more equitable and make its practitioners more cognizant of the deeply held racism and

biases that do harm in our classrooms, to our students, and to each other. These voices have been powerful but often lonely ones, sparsely distributed across an academic landscape that often has not heard or acknowledged them. Many of us and our readers know all too well that working alone leads to burnout and that individual voices of dissent may be systematically silenced by the very same institutions and practices they seek to reform (Baca, 2021; Kynard, 2015).

However, if we believe that shifting discourse itself is part of effecting change within the system and discipline, we can recognize how, as calls for action continue to rise and as connections between these voices continue to strengthen, individual activist scholarship begins to cohere to create collective action.

This scholarship (e.g., Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Malea Powell, Jacqueline Jones Royster) often bends genre conventions of structure and formality, bringing greater awareness to dominant paradigms that may be resistance to change—the kind of change that posits that languages are meant to be fluid, molded, and responsive to time, social groups, and culture. These recent efforts have ranged from collaborative change-work and resistance at individual institutions to the formation of new networks to resist the disciplinary histories and epistemologies that maintain white cultural hegemony in virtual spaces within composition and rhetoric (see Ruiz et al. in this collection).

We explore another such disciplinary and administrative space: the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Arguably our discipline's foremost professional organization, CCCC historically has celebrated the "heteroglossic" nature of the profession (Lunsford, 1990), while simultaneously silencing other voices (Grayson, 2023; Holdstein, 2008; Inoue, 2019; Ruiz, 2021). Recognizing that anti-racist work, like any effort at systemic change, requires collaboration and coalition (Jones et al., 2021), and knowing that sharing the counternarratives and testimonials of the educators and administrators whose voices and stories have been marginalized and misrepresented is itself a form of resistance (Garcia et al., 2021; Martinez, 2020), this essay highlights, through intersecting co-author counternarratives, another example of how individual diverse voices, responding to a single kairotic, networked moment, have come together to amplify the calls that, for decades, have demanded a shift to antiracist and inclusive practices at all system- and network-levels within one of the foremost professional spaces in our field. This positioning—moving singular activism to collective, systematic action—highlights the need for recognition of the individual and the story, as well as how those stories create connections across hegemonic systems in order for change to take root and flourish.

JANELLE JENNINGS-ALEXANDER'S COUNTERNARRATIVE

At the opening address for the CCCC Annual Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the 2019 Conference Chair Asao Inoue offered something that we rarely hear at these kinds of meetings—a deliberate and unwavering calling out of white supremacy. His remarks began with an acknowledgment of the colonization of the Indigenous lands on which we gathered and a direct address to scholars of color in the room, fully decentering whiteness in a space—and a profession—fully dominated by it. As he pointedly told the white scholars in the hall:

Because I love you, I will be honest with you, and it may hurt. But I promise you; it hurts not because I've done something wrong, but because I'm exposing your racial wounds. . . . I also ask many of you to be patient as I first address my colleagues of color, but the fact that I must ask for your patience to do this is evidence of the White supremacy that even we, conscientious teachers of writing, are saturated in. (Inoue, 2019)

While Inoue's remarks were rooted in compassion, not everyone in the audience felt the love that morning. This moment of truth-telling, based on the reaction of some of the audience, felt like an act of aggression, of subversion, of insurrection. And, despite the hundreds of people in the room, it was silent. Perhaps the silence was due to the early hour or the general formality that distinguishes a keynote. Or, perhaps, the quiet was due to a brutal truth: calling out white supremacy can be dangerous work, a danger often marked by public silence and private condemnation.

Indeed, there are and have been many others who recognize the persistence of structural inequality within the field of rhetoric and composition studies and the structures of professional organizations like CCCC. Still, many see such discussions as addressing one-off incidents and not significant trends. Race and racism are not discussed or, at times, not even acknowledged as foundational and institutional, "leaving us with no means to confront the racialized atmosphere of the university and no way to account for the impact of the persistence of prejudice on writers and texts" (Prendergast, 2003, p. 36). The silence that filled the room at the CCCC keynote galvanized many who care deeply about the future of language education. It revealed how silence related to racism—but extended to other areas of difference like ethnicity, class, ability, and gender—can undermine attempts to achieve equity in our classrooms, professional organizations, scholarship, leadership, and relationships with one another.

After the address, members engaged in general civil debates via the Writing Program Administrators listserv (WPA-L) and Twitter (see Iris Ruiz et al.'s chapter and Erec Smith's chapter in this collection). That civility, however, was punctured by an anonymous user who dismissed the value of equity work done in composition studies and signed their post "Grand Scholar Wizard," an overt reference to the KKK and dog whistle to white supremacy. In that one post, the user revealed the organization's extreme divisiveness and re-emphasized the need for individual actors to collectively step forward to address the silent and pervasive nature of white supremacy and structural inequality within the CCCC in a fight to save the soul of the field.

The individuals in this chapter responded to that call by sharing their experiences at the 2019 convention, on the WPA-L, and on social media sites. These scholars, who have professionally and personally dedicated their time to researching and addressing silence on white supremacy within writing studies, connected through social media to share their commitment to bringing about change. Individual activism against powerful structures can be difficult, but networks like the ones formed in social spaces like the WPA-L help bind individual actors to each other, granting them social capital and giving them the kind of power needed to shape organizational practice. "Social network theory and analysis can provide helpful insights and strategies . . . to understand the social structure underlying patterns of social injustice as well as efforts to resist social injustice" (Hansen, 2009, p. 5). In this case, social network theory helps explain how individual voices built binding connections to amplify the call to action begun by individual practitioners.

In the months after the WPA-L meltdown, voices that spoke up and spoke back have used the collective power of the social network to amplify this debate and lobby for counter-structures to defy systems of oppression. To that end, the Executive Committee of CCCC established the Committee for Change (CFC). The CFC brought together scholar-educator-activists—from graduate students to emeritus professors, from faculty at major research universities to adjunct instructors at two-year colleges—who share an understanding that a field like ours has the ability to bring diverse voices together to chart new pathways for the future to create a unified call for action. The group engages in an "insurgent intellectual cultural practice" to advocate for long-term, systematic change at administrative levels that will allow for equity and celebrations of difference as a foundational part of the CCCC (hooks, 2015, p. 8).

In this collaborative essay, we committee members engage in a "self-conscious interrogation of how dominant, hegemonic, rhetorics circulate and inform our understanding of authority, entitlement, exclusion, and erasure" within the systems that frame the CCCC (Baca et al., 2019, p. 2). We bear witness to the need for systemic change and offer our counter-narratives as a "community of scholars

and teachers who share your concerns about important issues influencing the teaching of composition and rhetoric” (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 2023, para. 2). These stories intend to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, and we know that, even as we give voice to our own stories of marginalization, many other stories remain untold. We see this essay as continuing decades-long efforts to build a more inclusive professional organization of writing studies teachers and scholars.

MARA LEE GRAYSON’S COUNTERNARRATIVE

Jesus still loves you, read the scrawl on the little yellow Post-it.

It was March 2019. I was in Pittsburgh, between sessions at the annual CCCC convention.

For ten minutes, I’d slowly circled the metal installation honoring the victims of the mass shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue, scanning the notes and wishes tacked to its thin mesh walls. Most were messages of hope and perseverance: love trumps hate. Resist. There were a few prayers, a few quotes from scholars and activists, a few condemnations of racism and gun violence—and now this.

I felt like someone had punched me in the stomach. But I’m a researcher, right? I had to make sense of the statement. I had to figure out what it meant.

Who does Jesus still love? I asked myself. Does Jesus still love the Jewish heretics who don’t worship him? I’d heard that before, usually followed by a warning that, should I not accept Jesus as my personal savior, I’d be destined to spend eternity in Hell. Or does Jesus still love the man who killed eleven Jewish people in Squirrel Hill just months earlier? At best, the statement was narrow-minded and discriminatory in its attempts to deny Jewish people a belief system; at worst, it celebrated the coldblooded hate-motivated murder of more innocent people than I could count on my hands, which were cold and shaking.

In many ways, CCCC 2019 had felt like a turning point in our discipline, a climax to so much that had built up in recent years. I felt it in Vershawn Ashanti Young’s Black English call for proposals and Asao B. Inoue’s Chair’s Speech denouncing white language supremacy and challenging us, especially those of us who are white, to reflect upon our complicity in maintaining racism through pedagogy. I felt it during presentations and hallway conversations. Though many of us, especially my colleagues of color, had been doing antiracist work for decades, in Pittsburgh it wasn’t only happening in caucus meetings, edited collections, and the occasional guest edited issue of a mainstream scholarly journal. The gaze of our organization was unwaveringly focused on publicly unearthing the deep-seated ideologies and practices that maintain inequity in our field and for our students.

Yet even as we emphasized equity, racism was inescapable. During and after Inoue's speech, amid nods of agreement and rounds of applause, I noticed attendees shaking their heads and conspicuously sitting on their hands. These symbolic gestures of resistance made clear that we were not a unified community of teachers and scholars standing strong against inequity but instead an organization divided. While some of us believed ourselves to be pushing back in solidarity against systems of injustice and rhetorical violence, others used body language to identify themselves as part of another system, one defined by the very injustices we sought to illuminate, a system threatened by the very existence of ours.

Racist ideology runs deep, and racism has always thrived alongside antisemitism. As a white, ethnically Jewish woman whose body of work focuses on antiracism, identifying as marginalized in academia often feels strange to me: how can one be marginalized yet overrepresented simultaneously? While some white Jewish people see this as a reason to keep their heads down, I and other members of the NCTE/CCCC Jewish Caucus believe that our ample representation puts us in a unique position to challenge the innate white supremacy of U.S. higher education.

As both ethnicity and religion (with many Jewish people identifying with one more than the other), Jewish identity is complex and complicated. Some U.S. Jews identify as having no religion, and some are multiethnic or multiracial. Although there may be up to 200,000 Black U.S. Jews, and though some Jewish people have dark skin, in the prevailing racial binary, Jewish people are generally categorized as white, even by antiracist authors and activists (see, for example, Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006; Coates, 2009). This reductive framing obscures the intersectional marginalization many of us who are Jewish experience in society and in our professional lives.

Unfortunately, the structures of our scholarly spaces perpetuate reductive conceptions of identity: at CCCC, Caucus and Special Interest Group meetings are scheduled simultaneously, forcing members to choose one identity to nurture in any given year. Only rarely do the caucuses, SIGs, or group chairpersons meet together, which makes challenging the structures that marginalize all of us, albeit in different ways, considerably more difficult. Working with the CFC (and other formal and informal professional groups, including the WPA-L Reimagining Working Group) has provided me an invaluable opportunity to work alongside colleagues, some I've known and some I'm grateful to have met through this work, who are committed to equity. The culturally and socially situated perspectives we each bring to this work better prepares us to attend to the nuances of our work together.

We are stronger when we work together. We, especially we who benefit from the privileges afforded us by white hegemony, must challenge and combat

the racism, antisemitism, misogyny, homophobia, Islamophobia, ableism, and numerous other injustices white supremacy promulgates within the academy. Those critiques must extend beyond the bounds of scholarship, administration, and pedagogy: we need to look within our own disciplinary spaces to examine the ingrained ideologies, epistemologies, and practices, blatant or covert, that serve to exclude so many of our members.

TAMARA ISSAK AND LANA OWEIDAT'S COUNTERNARRATIVE

In 2019, the fourth meeting of the Arab/Muslim Special Interest Group (SIG) took place at CCCC. The group hosted a meet and greet session with an author, and the agenda also included tackling issues that the attendees wished to discuss related to Arab/Muslim identity and Arab-Islamic rhetorical studies.

During this meeting, we had a mix of attendees, some identifying as Arab or Muslim and others not, and all were welcome. During an open discussion, one attendee shared her frustrations with teaching Arab and/or Muslim students at her university. She stated that her Arab and/or Muslim students would often self-segregate, and they refused to discuss their culture and religion with the class when prompted. She suggested that the Arab and/or Muslim students should go back to where they came from if they were not willing to engage. She presented herself as an ally who wanted to help. Although her intentions in being a good professor seemed sincere, she voiced racist and troubling views about her students. Attendees politely disagreed with her analysis of the students' behavior. The more we responded, the more she spoke her mind, and in the end the conversation took up the time we had allotted (60 minutes). The meeting ended, the professor left, and we looked around at each other overwhelmed and upset by the conversation.

Should we have asked her to leave? Did we have the authority to do so? How should we have handled this situation differently?

This experience is not random; it speaks to a larger problem in academia and, on a smaller scale, in the field of rhetoric and composition. As a field invested in addressing issues of cross-cultural engagement, equity, and social justice, some may fall into the trap of empty multiculturalism without questioning systems and networks that perpetuate injustices. For example, faculty may voice support for the value of cultures and diversity in their classrooms, programs, and administrative work, but in practice they may view those unwilling or unable to conform as deficient or uncooperative.

Many teachers in our field are trained to honor and respect students' different Englishes. However, fewer teachers have the skills or training to implement

an anti-racist pedagogy which enacts this ideal. In the case of the students in the aforementioned class, the students were not only multilingual, but they were also from countries typically derided by the West as uncivilized and anti-American. We think many teachers are not ready to address the complexities of Arab and Muslim students' identities as they manifest themselves in the classroom, and this certainly seemed to be the case here. The combination of implicit bias against Arabs, Muslims, and people of color coupled with a general lack of knowledge and expertise about how to teach multilingual students create a violent and hostile environment for these students.

The creation of our SIG was an attempt to create systemic change in the field by making visible the experiences of Arabs and Muslims and highlighting scholarship on Arab and Muslim issues and identities. As the co-chairs of the SIG, we welcome political discussions while rejecting an apolitical approach that perpetuates systems of privilege, whiteness, American exceptionalism, and monolingualism. These systems ignore the complexities of identity, diversity, and difference.

This was not the first time that we encountered racism and acts of aggression at CCCC. One year, an attendee made a statement during a large group discussion that there was truth to the stereotype that Arab men are hypersexualized and predatory. This comment took the group by surprise and was unrelated to the conversation at hand. Another year, a veiled Muslim woman shared her story of narrowly escaping physical assault after the Muslim Ban, and another attendee responded by downplaying her experience explaining to the white people in the room that the situation was not so bad for us Muslims. Though these examples could be written off as isolated incidents, we see a pattern. Underlying these actions is a view of Arabs and Muslims as a peculiar group of people, Other. Their foreignness is usually exaggerated, corresponding to a stereotypical view of Arabs and Muslims as barbaric, less civilized, and anti-American.

As CCCC members, we ask:

- What does it mean to be an ally?
- How can we raise the visibility and issues impacting SIGs and caucuses?
- What can be done about the hierarchical arrangement of various groups within the organization?
- How can we simplify procedures to make the organization more inclusive and increase participation among members?

These questions are critical especially at a conference like CCCC whose members are committed to equity and inclusion.

The microaggressions we describe are symptomatic of larger racist structures that manifest themselves in our behaviors and practices. Sara Ahmed (2012)

explained that organizations deal with diversity by delegating diversity issues to one or two people within the organization leaving a monumental structural issue to be dealt with by a team that could never possibly address the systemic issue alone. Thus, organizations deal with diversity by not actually dealing with it. At CCCC, SIG meetings are side events; they are not sponsored by CCCC, and they do not influence the structural inequities in the organization as a whole. In other words, they provide CCCC with the appearance of diversity even as the organization remains largely white and monolingual. Ahmed further wrote, “[B]odies of color provide organizations with tools, ways of turning action points into outcomes.” Therefore, people of color are “ticks in the boxes” (p. 153). This performativity of empty multiculturalism that CCCC engages in reproduces racial oppressive structures through progressive practices. We hope that, through this work, we will be able to contribute to structural change at CCCC that disrupts racism and engages ethically with difference. We believe that we cannot solve these challenges individually and that the power is in networked exchange and collaboration.

CHRISTINA V. CEDILLO’S COUNTERNARRATIVE

In 2012, I attended CCCC and listened to the Chair give her address. Malea Powell (2012) spoke about stories that liberate and stories that paper over others’ histories (I mean literally, as in the *letteraturizzazione* explained by Mignolo, 2003). She is a Native scholar, and she began with a land acknowledgment and explained that the talk was a communal text, not a singular story. Then she said something that made me feel like I could finally relax: “When I say ‘story,’ I don’t mean for you to think ‘easy.’ Stories are anything but easy. When I say story, I mean an event in which I try to hold some of the complex shimmering strands of a constellative, epistemological space long enough to share them with you” (2012, p. 384). I wanted to yell, “*RIGHT?*” As someone from my community/ies, a Latinx of Indigenous descent, a Chicana, it was always hard for me to “write with authority” as my professors expected. It felt like trying to lay an epistemic claim over Reality. Back home, that behavior earns you a much deserved, “Oye oye, quién te crees?”

Listening to Powell speak about stories, I tried to not get obviously emotional, because I was thinking of swinging on my grandparents’ front porch with my grandmother as she told me about things she learned as a girl in Mexico. She told me that she’d wanted so much to go to college, but those were different times, especially for smart Indigenous women. I was thinking about my women students who deal with colonialist misogyny today, only to be told overtly and through microaggressions that they do not belong in college. We

all have stories but some are de-legitimized; the ivory tower is built not with bricks but with silence.

Bodies matter. The bodies we inhabit determine the experiences we have in the world. As educators, we know learning and life never happen in a vacuum. We advocate for critical pedagogies that center marginalized identities and would like to think our colleagues appreciate that our students' identities matter and that our identities matter. Yet we keep having to repeat similar arguments from different angles using different approaches because many colleagues refuse to understand. Those of us from marginalized communities, students, teachers, and administrators, continue to contend with what Asao Inoue (2019) called "the steel bars of racism and White language supremacy" (p. 356). I'll say it again: *the bodies we inhabit determine the experiences we have in the world.*

Except, that's not the whole story. The rest of the story is this—how people interpret our bodies determines what experiences we have in the world. Right now, the world is on fire and actual neo-fascist, white supremacists march for their right to terrorize anyone who isn't white, male, cis, straight, able-bodied, European/American. I often hear that it feels like we've slipped into some dystopian parallel universe, and I am always compelled to say, "Welcome to our world." This isn't *schadenfreude* but truth, because some of us have lived with this violence every single day of our lives. I don't wish this on anyone, not even those who enable these violences through their inaction or indifference. But I do wish our colleagues with the most privilege would help stop the burning.

At this point in my career, I have attended a lot of conferences where I feel like the cliché sore thumb, the one brown face at a panel and one of the few in the whole space. This setup proves especially interesting when you're there to hear people discuss issues of race or disability and the progress "we've" made as a discipline. These narratives—replete with self-congratulatory pats on the back—prove we inhabit different chronotopes.

You know what happens to your body outside of your own time/space? It's not really yours. Suddenly, everything you do seems conspicuous; you're the clumsiest person in the room; you let people know through your awkwardness that you really don't belong. Everyone seems so relaxed and refined, and you can't help but notice that the only other non-white folks around are the staff, whom many of these grand scholars don't even see. Inevitably, the staff (who are people, you know) act like they expect you to ignore them too, and they look surprised when you smile back. This tells me that they're used to being invisible. In contrast, I am hypervisible. But we are all unwelcome in these spaces.

Years later after attending my first CCCC, I still get emotional because I dare to have hope. My tears are not sadness but rage that those who already have to work so hard have to work harder still, only to be dismissed because their

identities and struggles don't fit whitestream rubrics. Written off by "important scholars" who stand at the podium to say they regard all students as equal, no matter their race or ethnicity; respect their disabled students enough to give them no "special treatment" when accommodations are a bare minimum and required by law; deem their students' queer identities none of their business. To these "important people who benefit from and perpetuate the white supremacy of our disciplinary spaces, I want to say, "We are not on the same team just because we teach or attend Cs if we argue for different measures of our supposed shared humanity." Needless to say, there were evident grumbles after Powell's address and after Inoue's, too.

Dear grumblers, your marginalized colleagues notice when you react negatively if we are centered for once, when you dare prioritize the discomfort of a day or two over another's lifetime of injury. Far beyond the conference space, your umbrage reinforces your privilege and intensifies our vulnerability. Bodies matter but words enmatter bodies. It's that simple. So like Inoue, I ask you to consider, "Does your dominant, White set of linguistic habits of language kill people?"

ASHANKA KUMARI'S COUNTERNARRATIVE

I left CCCC 2018 frustrated. Yet again, I attended a conference for which I worked hard on my presentation to only be slotted in a last-day session time with only four people in attendance—three of whom attended because they would join my carpool back to our home city immediately after my session. I remember tossing a stack of printed access copies of my presentation in a nearby recycling bin on my way out of the room. Why do I invest so much time and money into conferences to receive little to no engagement on my work?

To be fair, the days leading up to this unfortunate presentation were among the best Cs conference experiences I had ever had. A recipient of the Scholars for the Dream award that year—an annual award that sponsors conference participation from members of historically underrepresented groups—I was happily inundated and enthralled to finally get to be a part of a community where I felt I belonged in the field, a community filled with people who looked more like me than those in most academic spaces I've occupied. I spent much of my time at this Cs conference in the Scholars for the Dream lounge space, where I met and networked with incredible (mostly senior) scholars that made me feel welcomed, valued, and offered feedback on my ideas.

In addition to the networking opportunity, I got a peek at the CCCC 2019 CFP, which focused on "Performance-Rhetoric, Performance-Composition." I wondered how I might take some of my dissertation work and submit a proposal for the following year, but I digress. After my poorly attended presentation

at CCCC 2018, I was left wondering if I should bother to apply for the next conference. The ever-present imposter syndrome flared, and I decided to focus on other endeavors.

Until I couldn't. I couldn't ignore the racist, classist, sexist, ableist and other issues that dominated the WPA-L in response to the 2019 C's call. I couldn't ignore the ways graduate student- and junior scholar-friend/colleagues were quickly berated for talking back to the incredibly hostile listserv conversations. I wondered, again, whether I belonged in this discipline.

In this WPA-L moment, graduate students were immediately disempowered by the words of senior scholars. While this continued to unfold, many graduate students, junior and senior scholars back-channeled the listserv conversations to Twitter to discuss this clear shaming that continued to take place in WPA-L posts. During this backchanneling, then graduate students Kyle Larson and Lucy Johnson responded to junior scholar Estee Beck's tweet about the need for a safer space for graduate students to dialogue about issues in the field. Specifically, Estee tweeted about what was going on the WPA-L and recognized this need, which Kyle and Lucy further agreed and began a conversation on. And thus, the nextGEN listserv began to take shape. Ten of us engaged in this labor, administrative, emotional, and cognitive, on top of our existing commitments, the majority of which are severely underpaid graduate-stipends during the end of a school year, a time that we all know is particularly hectic for all schedules. I, alongside Kyle Larson and Sweta Baniya became one of the three initiating moderators.

In less than a year, nextGEN began to foster "an advocacy space for graduate students centering around principles of justice, equity, and community" (Kumari, et al., 2020, para. 1). With more than 500 listserv subscribers engaging in weekly discussions on a variety of rhetoric and writing topics, including the systems and networks underpinning teaching, research, and administration, we made numerous professional strides to be proud of including a collaboratively co-authored listserv-to-listserv response to the problematic decorum of the WPA-L, calling for a code of conduct and moderators in that space.

In his Chair's Program Address, 2019 CCCC Chair Vershawn Ashanti Young highlighted the role of nextGEN as a "group of multiracial graduate students talkin' bout: we at the C's and in dis profession, y'all better recognize." This statement was accompanied with a physical space in the form of an Action Hub table and a SIG session time for nextGEN listserv members to physically connect.

As I begin life on the tenure track, I wonder how we can not only make space for new and underrepresented voices in the field, but also create long-term structures of support beyond one-and-done conference presentation scholarships or tables. For instance, existing writing and rhetoric listservs such as WPA-L and nextGEN offer opportunities for networking and connecting about topics about

our praxis. Or, in another example, existing disciplinary SIGs and Committees, like the Committee for Change, offer opportunities to create systematic, administrative, and disciplinary change. I want to paraphrase Marian Vasser, the Director of Diversity Education and Inclusive Excellence at the University of Louisville, who taught me through our conversations together that “diversity is what it looks like; inclusion is what it feels like” (Vasser, 2018). While CCCC might be considered diverse in the sense of its membership, caucus spaces offering sites for shared identity communities, and a range of topics present in its annual program, it is not inclusive.

Inclusion means working to reduce triple-digit conference rates, especially for those in precarious positions. Inclusion means that when promoting conference events that include alcohol or non-diet friendly foods, consider food preparation practices and those who cannot be around alcohol for personal, religious, or any reason. Inclusion means attending the presentations of voices beyond our colleagues: consider purposefully attending at least one presentation with new-to-you voices. Inclusion means making spaces as accessible as possible to all: consider not only asking presenters to print access copies but providing the means to do so; offering stim objects, such as fidget spinners and pop-its, in presentation rooms; and providing multiple quiet room locations throughout the massive venue for participants to escape what is immensely overstimulating.

We must do better to actively model, encourage, and practice inclusion in ways that support both the present and new generation of scholars, teachers, and voices to come. To echo Inoue (2019), this effort requires all members of this discipline to act: “And I stand up here today asking everyone to listen, to see, to know you as you are, to stop saying *shit* about injustice while doing *jack shit* about it. We are all needed in this project, this fight, this work, these labors [emphasis in the original]” (p. 355).

CAITLYN RUDOLPH-SCHRAM COUNTERNARRATIVE

I’m not even supposed to be in this space. This is a professional space. There are scholars in this space who have authored the books I’m reading as part of my MA work. I’m following the WPA-L to fulfill the professional development component of my WPA class. I am the only student in my cohort following. It has been made very clear that the listserv is for the “big dogs”—my professor does not even feel comfortable posting. Thus, as a graduate student, my role is to be an observer only. They don’t respond kindly to graduate students in their space.

I catch Vershawn Ashanti Young’s CCCC’s Call for Proposals. I don’t read much past the initial responses but begin cataloguing the conversation—I can’t

keep up. I'm not used to the way the listserv functions. I do not see the problems arising until several months later when I revisit the catalogued conversations.

In the first semester of my second year of my MA, my WPA asks if I've seen the listserv. No? I need to check it out, immediately. I return to my office and spend the next several hours reading the thread started by Michelle LaFrance, "Request for Rubrics." This is important. For the first time I'm witnessing senior scholars being called out for problematic behavior.

I begin cataloguing again. I find the #WPAListservFeministRevolution hashtag on Twitter. I do the thing I'm not supposed to, I respond to the listserv. I have to. I can't not. Other graduate students are already putting themselves on the line and I want them to know that they are not alone and that this feeling of risking everything just to speak to injustice is shared, but also oh so worth it. We are not supposed to be here. Some senior scholars cheer us on, some try to silence us. We push back, and this resistance extends beyond the life of the thread itself.

Those brave voices were emboldening, but not nearly as inspiring as those speaking truth to life on the backchannels, on Twitter. If it weren't for the #WPAListservFeministRevolution I would not be here writing this.

My research has always tried to involve social media and the communities we build. The Twitter community that emerged from the listserv, especially this particular thread, is community in action. We share our stories of discomfort and exclusion from the very space that is supposed to be for all of us and from the field itself. Those excluded range, not unexpectedly, from graduate students, non-tenure-track faculty, adjuncts, people of color, women, LGBT folx, and disabled folx—at every intersection and in-between. The listserv, undoubtedly, mirrors the same oppression and marginalization we experience every day from the public sector and the very institutions that claim to need our diversity.

I attend CCCC for the first time in 2019. I make it a point to only attend sessions that directly address institutional issues of racism, sexism, colonialism. I spend my first day in an Indigenous Rhetorics retreat, trying to understand my own white privileged, mixed blood positionality and how to fight institutional systems and structures of colonialism. I write down everything, trying to absorb these stories into muscle memory. I listen to Asao Inoue passionately call for a fight against institutional white supremacy in our classrooms. I am asked to acknowledge how my very presence in the classroom, as a white person, reinforces this supremacy. I am able to sit in this discomfort; it's a discomfort I have been actively engaging with for a while in order to try to do better and be better.

Leaving Inoue's speech, I read a response from a scholar I admire about how white people are not a monolith. My heart sinks. I keep going to sessions trying to learn as much as I can about doing this work, this oh-so-necessary, radically

important work that I want to do. I listen as Sherita Roundtree shares the experiences of Black women GTAs, I listen as Neisha-Anne Green (Faison et al., 2019) passionately shares her frustration with a culture that coddles white people and expects continuous labor from people of color. I abandon ideas of allyship in favor of being an accomplice. I leave CCCC with so much to integrate into my own practices and so much reflection. There is so much work to do.

It's not long until another listserv breakdown. This time, nothing is veiled—the racism is blatant. It is anonymous. It is not handled quietly. There are very few of us still too scared to speak up. The community we've developed has emboldened us. Because that's really what this has become. This isn't about the listserv—this is about marginalized folx and their accomplices combating the intrinsically exclusionary nature of our field and our institution through a radically inclusive community.

So much of what we do in academia is shaped by violent institutional structures—structures that are designed to exclude and oppress the very people it depends on when they fall outside of the white, straight, cis, able-bodied “norm.” The work that we have the opportunity to do on the CFC is to radically transform the dominant structures of the field, to call out and condemn acts of violence committed against marginalized folx, and to set a precedent in how to move forward.

The listserv will not change until the field does.

So many of my colleagues here have touched on the problems that permeate the discipline so well. They are serious and numerous and even more reflective of the society and culture we live and exist in. My experience as an academic in rhetoric and composition has been almost entirely shaped by my interactions with the listserv and the community formed on Twitter as a response. Some may say that's an awful way to get into the discipline—I disagree. While problems abound, the community is full of some of the best people doing groundbreaking work and research. I'm lucky to be here.

TRENT M. KAYS' COUNTERNARRATIVE

I'm a queer Buddhist first-generation college writing professor from a working- and middle-class background. I'm a lot of things, but, of course, I'm not only those things. Indeed, I chafe at the form of an academic. My first two years of college were at a community college, and I am proud of my community college experience. But I have been in rooms where a community college background is treated with contempt.

The stench of elitism is hard to wash off. I have seen it creep into discussions of first-year writing, especially where non-rhetoric and composition scholars are

“forced” to teach first-year writing students. How we *talk* about first-year writing (and writing in general) is as vital as what we *do* in first-year writing. Carolyn Calhoun-Dillahunt articulated this in her 2018 CCCC Chair’s Address. She remarked, “When I refer to first-year writing in this talk, I am not talking about a particular content, but rather a space in academia” (p. 276). In this case, a space within an established system. Undeniably, it is critical to treat first-year writing as something special, where narratives and identities are formed, bounce into each other, and meld into something else. Like my component identities, students are more than students. They are other things. They are living human beings with wants, desires, fears, and struggles.

As a discipline, writing studies presents a problem. The discipline that is dependent on the narratives and identities of students must also continue to articulate its own narratives and identities. Those who work within the discipline must regularly draft a narrative that considers the vagaries and hostilities of constituent identities both inside and outside the academic and administrative environment. Certainly, how we locate and understand those narratives and identities becomes crucial to our work and in challenging systemic norms.

As an outgrowth of NCTE, CCCC is not independent in the same way as other disciplinary organizations, such as Rhetoric Society of America. This contributes to the chafing of my role as an academic. I understand CCCC as a space meant to be welcoming, compassionate, and collaborative; however, this is not always the case. Our discipline and our conferences are not composed of only those people who are trained in the teaching of writing and administration of writing and language programs. As a scholar of rhetoric and writing studies, my role as a writing professor is still treated with derision in certain departments (e.g., English literature) and disciplines. I am a necessary evil for some who consider their disciplines as more learned. I am a professor in the back of the room who is “just a writing teacher.” Our discipline continues to struggle with this identity crisis.

In attending CCCC, I have found those of similar thought and action, and an important element of that has been the caucuses and SIGs. But it is not enough to sequester our narratives and identities in small spaces and then push them aside when we must re-enter the larger disciplinary conversation. Despite the binding goal of higher education, the identity crisis of our discipline has forced us to contend with the idea that we must choose one face to wear in our specialties, one face to wear at conferences, and one face to wear in our departments. The opportunity presented to the CFC is to challenge the idea that our narratives and identities must be sequestered from the larger conversation of disciplinarity and the antiquated notions still governing our work. The governing system we find ourselves in is the same system in need of reform or in need of destruction.

The ruling elitism must be eliminated, and the causes for racism, antisemitism, homophobia, unfair labor practices, and other issues need to be identified, examined, and removed. We can construct a new disciplinary identity by recognizing that we are capable of moving in a new and compassionate direction. We should not be afraid of our discomfort; rather, we should use it to learn and grow and change. In constructing this future, we will experience “the troubling and exhilarating feeling that things *could be different*, or at least that *they could still fail*—a feeling never so deep when faced with the final product, no matter how beautiful or impressive it may be” (Latour, 2005, p. 89).

The work of our discipline is daunting. We need look no further than posts on the WPA-L to see our discipline still has issues to confront and work to complete. Writing instructors and WPAs are in the trenches of higher education. Every other discipline depends on our ability to help students become better writers and better thinkers. This amount of pressure is suffocating. The formation of the CFC shows we can no longer wait: we must change—now.

I’m not just a queer Buddhist first-generation college writing professor. I’m a brother, a friend, a colleague, a volunteer. As we consider the CFC’s mandate, we must ask ourselves: what do we want our discipline to be known for? What narratives do we want identified with our work? And who do we want to be?

Our urgency for change requires a willingness for discomfort and a willingness to confront failure. It requires a willingness to stand together and push forward as the habits of the past attempt to pull us backward. We can no longer tolerate the derision of our work or our colleagues. This change requires bravery.

Let’s be brave.

BERNICE OLIVAS’ COUNTERNARRATIVE

CCCC 2019 provided clear examples of how exclusionary actions take place in our professional spaces. This reality isn’t easy to hear, partly because the rhetoric and composition self-narrative is a fiction of inclusion and equity. When we tell our histories and self-narratives, we are what Jim Corder (1985) called “fiction-makers/historians” (p. 16). The human in us crafts our narratives into something we can live with.

Unfortunately, crafting a story about how far we’ve come, about good intentions, about being the progressive branch of the academic tree, does not make it true. Systems of inequity are embedded in our discipline. People of color, LGBTQ+, and disabled folx are still woefully underrepresented in tenure track positions, publications, and seats of power. Our students become more diverse while the faces at the front of the room stay the same. White supremacy never left our field, it just changed. White supremacy crawls into tiniest spaces and takes root.

This truth shouldn't paralyze us with guilt or frustration—it should compel us to action. As a field we need to commit to building up diverse faculty, to celebrating diverse scholars and administrators, and to writing policy that is equitable and just. This work can only begin if the discipline of composition and rhetoric, the WPA, and CCCC stop telling a fiction of our discipline and open ourselves up to listening to the stories we *don't* want to hear.

To change our story, we must “painfully reconcile our habits of judgment, and that means painfully reconciling the paradox between ourselves and our actions” so that we can change “the structures, [cut] the steel bars, [alter] the ecology [to] change the way power moves through White racial biases” (Inoue, 2019, p. 364).

The CFC is charged to make “structural changes to CCCC that address white supremacy and . . . develop a set of guidelines for ethical engagement at CCCC annual convention.” This will not be the work of a year or three, a single committee or a series of them. This work needs to be persistent and present every year as we move forward.

As Ashanka Kumari tells us in her narrative above, inclusion means we must be willing to address the issues without fear. We, as a field, must commit to reframing our conversations about white supremacy, inclusion, and equity into a language of action—not a language of intention. We must be willing to discuss racist actions and structures and their consequences without centering on the intentions of the action or the structure. Centering on how being named racist, instead of how being treated with racism, affects individuals, communities, and organizations is one of white supremacy's greatest tricks. If we are ever to tell a story of our field that we can all live with, we must center our conversation on the people who *cannot live* within the fiction we are telling now.

IMPLICATIONS FOR READERS AND CONCLUSION

As demonstrated by the CFC members, seizing kairotic moments and getting to work are key components of systemic change. Below is a compilation of just a few of the actions curated by CFC members throughout the chapter. These actions are meant to highlight anti-racist, inclusionary work currently taking place, as well as challenge individual narratives that may continue to, even unwittingly, support heteronormative, white supremacist ableism.

- Involve yourself in your institution's larger committees and structures with the express purpose of simplifying bureaucracy, increasing access, and calling out exclusionary behaviors.
- On the committees and in the groups in which you are currently a member, ask for and push toward collaborative meetings of leaders

and members across committee boundaries, to increase awareness of and breakdown siloing within the system.

- When taking part in conferences—either through attendance, presentation, and/or scholarship—as editor, writer, or reviewer—or community spaces—leading or lurking, moderating or writing—pay attention. Who is speaking? Who has room? What is embodied within the space? What are your patterns of “attendance” across these spaces?
- When taking part in administrative work—either through committee work, curriculum design, program assessment, etc.—pay attention to who is speaking and who has the room. How might you shape which voices are respected and prioritized? How might you create administrative processes and practices that prioritize equity and inclusion?
- What dominant narratives frame your own experiences and actions? What administrative work are you committed to doing, personally, to center the need for change?
- Before closing your exercises with the authors, enact purposeful attention to this chapter’s genre bending of the academic, peer-reviewed chapter. What do stories continue to teach us?

The voices of this chapter speak through stories, arguably one of the most systematically integrative genres of our field. Stories serve the rhetorical purposes of sharing identity, creating a network of support and action, an interwoven system that can affect real change. The stories offered here are a networked rhizome of experiences, perspectives, and counternarratives. They are shared within this collection to make the field’s policies and its practices more equitable and make its practitioners more cognizant of systems of racism and biases that harm our field. We urge the readers, break the fiction—be with CFC members. Do the work.

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